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Montana Bandit of the Late 1800s

Dutch Henry, an outlaw who roamed Montana in the late 1800s, was born in Switzerland (some say Holland) in 1873 and arrived in the United States in 1886. Montana's Dutch Henry should not be confused with the Dutch Henry of Colorado or Utah, both of whom carried the same name and were also outlaws. Oldtimers reported that Dutch Henry Jauch (pronounced Yaw) came into Montana with a cattle drive from Texas.

Dutch Henry had two brothers: Chris, a respectable cattle rancher, and Coyote Pete, a member of the infamous Wild Bunch. No known photographs of Dutch Henry exist, but Northwest Mounted Police records from 1898 described the 26-year-old as: "Five foot six, 150 pounds, blue eyes, small mustache, gold filled teeth, well dressed and speaking with a German accent." Other accounts recalled that he had light brown hair, a dark brown beard, and always used first-class horses and equipment.



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Jauch was known to have a good sense of humor, to be a big-time horse thief, and to operate out of Valley County. Montana. Movement of his stolen stock ran through Montana, Canada, the Dakotas, Wyo-ming and Minnesota. Among the thirty or so major outlaws of Valley County (established in 1893), Dutch Henry Jauch is remembered as the principal among them. In fact, a saloon in Peerless, Montana, Dutch Henry's Bar, is named after the outlaw.

Dutch Henry was active in Montana in 1888 or earlier, as he worked as a teenager on the Dave Kennedy Ranch located on Saco Flats. He was fired from this job though because he was "too loose" with a branding iron, meaning he altered brands so that he could steal horses. During this period Montana ranchers could register as many brands as they liked for only \$2 per brand, and they could put the brand anywhere on the animal. Many brands were unregis-tered; thus "livestock outlaws" could easily sell their stock at the railheads.

Dutch Henry trained horses for various Canadian ranches in the Big Muddy country and worked on the ranch of Pascal Bonneau & Sons, owner of the largest ranch in the area. Dutch Henry's next legitimate job was working for the N Bar N Ranch on Rock Creek a few miles north of Saco, Montana. The N Bar N, the largest ranch in Eastern Montana, ran more than 100,000 head of cattle in 1891.

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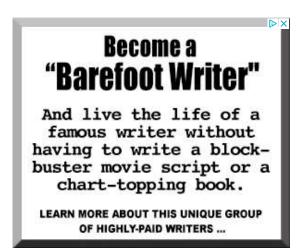
In about 1895, Dutch Henry moved east to Culbertson, Montana, a more lively region with major cattle and horse outfits—and many outlaws. During the next decade, Dutch Henry and the outlaws of the Big Muddy Creek terrorized settlers with their horse thievery, kidnap-ping and robberies. He established the Dutch Henry Ranch on Shotgun Creek. The country was full of canyons, gulches and coulees, suitable for concealing his nefarious activities. Dutch Henry himself lived in a carefully concealed dugout, and here he began his trade in earnest, stealing horses and changing their brands. There was a big market for these horses in the farmlands of Montana, the Canadian provinces, and in surrounding states. A \$9 horse could bring as much as \$200 in the right market. The U.S. Cavalry required a steady supply of good horseflesh and beef, and Dutch Henry sold plenty of both.

In the beginning of his career Jauch rode for the Diamond G, a horse ranch owned by JW "Dad" Williams, and he reportedly stole hundreds of horses from him. In 1895 he was arrested by Deputy John Eder in Culbertson for stealing cattle from two local ranchers. While Eder waited at the saloon for the sheriff to pick up the prisoner, Dutch Henry escaped. He was recaptured three weeks later, Dad Williams furnished his bail, and charges were dropped due to lack of evidence.

Early in his outlaw career, Jauch was known for his riding and roping talents, his sense of humor, his ability to tell stories, and was generally thought of as an all-around good guy...excepting his major vice—his criminal nature. While working as the wagon boss for the Diamond Cattle Company, Dutch Henry is credited

purraio criips wouldn't burn due to cold and dampness and while all the cowhands were nungry. Though the cowboys were still hungry when the cook returned, the stream officially became known as Plentywood Creek.

Ranchers who lived near Jauch and who were friendly with him spoke of his generosity, though he may have been stealing from them. He did favors in return for neighbors' help; yet if neighbors defied him, that neighbor would save himself and his family much trouble by packing up and moving elsewhere.



Long after other members of his outlaw gang had prices on their heads, Dutch Henry was able to roam about freely and go to town to buy supplies for the others. What happened to Dutch Henry is not certain, as there are several conflicting accounts of how he met his death in 1906. It is unknown if the long arm of the law finally brought him down or if he was murdered.

From the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage Center (Wolf Point, MT) into which Dutch Henry was inducted in 2008.



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